

We Claim:

1. A method for preparing a soy sour cream composition comprising:  
providing an aqueous soy composition;  
fermenting said soy composition with thermophilic bacteria;  
incorporating at least one of an oil and a fat component and said fermented soy composition; and  
heating said fermented soy composition to a temperature sufficient to substantially deactivate about 50% to 100% of said thermophilic bacteria.
2. The method of Claim 1 wherein said aqueous soy composition comprises a soy milk.
3. The method of Claim 1 wherein said aqueous soy composition comprises water, a dry whole soybean particulate and at least one of a food grade acid and a salt of said acid.
4. The method of Claim 1 further comprising incorporating a fat component with said aqueous soy composition and treating said soy composition at a pressure greater than about 2,000 psi.
5. The method of Claim 1 wherein said fermented soy composition is heated for at least one of a time and a temperature sufficient to substantially discontinue fermentation.
6. The method of Claim 5 wherein said fermented soy composition is heated for at least one of a time and a temperature sufficient to provide a substantially aseptic sour cream composition.
7. The method of Claim 1 further comprising treating fermented soy composition at a pressure greater than about 2000 psi.

8. The method of Claim 1 further comprising dehydrating said fermented soy composition.
9. The method of Claim 8 wherein said fermented soy composition is spray dried.
10. The method of Claim 8 comprising addition of water to reconstitute said dehydrated soy composition.
11. A process for preparing a sour cream product comprising:
  - providing an aqueous soy composition;
  - fermenting said aqueous soy composition with at least one thermophilic bacterial culture;
  - incorporating at least one of an oil and a fat component and said fermented soy composition;
  - stabilizing said fermented soy composition; and
  - heating said fermented soy composition to a temperature sufficient to provide a substantially aseptic sour cream product.
12. The process of Claim 11 wherein said fat and said oil component is selected from the group consisting of animal fats, vegetable oils, vegetable fats and combinations thereof.
13. The method of Claim 11 wherein said thermophilic bacterial culture comprises at least one Lactobacillus strain and at least one Streptococcus strain.
14. The method of Claim 11 further comprising adding a food grade acid to adjust the pH of the fermented soy composition.

15. A method of using thermophilic bacterial culture to prepare a base soy composition, said method comprising:

providing an aqueous soy composition;

introducing at least one thermophilic bacterial culture to said composition; and

fermenting said soy composition for a time and at a temperature sufficient to acidify said soy composition, said fermentation substantially absent an animal sugar.

16. The method of Claim 15 further comprising incorporation of said fermented composition with a fat component sufficient to provide a sour cream.

17. The method of Claim 15 further comprising dehydrating said fermented soy composition.

18. A room temperature, shelf-stable soy sour cream composition comprising the fermentation product of a soy component and thermophilic bacterial culture, a fat component from less than about 9 weight percent to greater than about 30 weight percent of said composition, and a stabilizer component; wherein about 50% to 100% of said bacteria are inactive.

19. The composition of Claim 18 wherein said soy component comprises at least one of a soy milk product, soy flakes, soy powder, soy flour, soy meal, soy grits, soy concentrate, soy isolate, soy tofu and combinations thereof.

20. The composition of Claim 19 wherein said soy milk product comprises a dry whole soybean particulate and at least one of a food grade acid and a salt of said acid.

21. The composition of Claim 18 wherein said thermophilic bacterial culture comprises at least one Lactobacillus strain and at least one Streptococcus strain.

22. The composition of Claim 21 wherein said thermophilic bacterial culture comprises from about 1 to about 99% Lactobacillus bacteria and from about 99 to about 1% thermophilic Streptococcus bacteria.

23. The composition of Claim 21 wherein said Lactobacillus strain comprises Lactobacillus bulgaricus and said Streptococcus strain comprises Streptococcus thermophilus.

24. The composition of Claim 18 wherein said fat component is selected from the group consisting of animal fats, vegetable oils, vegetable fats and combinations thereof.

25. The composition of Claim 18 wherein said stabilizer component comprises pectin, gelatin, carboxy methyl cellulose, guar gum, gum arabic, gellan gum, gum ghatti, gum tragacanth, agar, algin, locust bean gum, xanthan gum, carrageenan, sodium alginate, potassium alginate, propylene glycol alginate, or combinations thereof.

26. The composition of Claim 18 further comprising at least one probiotic culture selected from the group consisting of Lactobacillus acidophilus, Lactobacillus casei, Lactobacillus rhamnosus, Bifidobacterium bifidum, Bifidobacterium longum, Saccharomyces boulardii and combinations thereof.

27. The composition of Claim 18 further comprising a flavor component selected from dairy, fruit, vegetable, spice, salt, natural sweetener, artificial sweetener, chocolate, vanilla or combinations thereof.

28. A sour cream composition comprising:  
the fermentation product of a soy component and at least one active thermophilic bacterial culture; and  
at least one of a fat and an oil component,

wherein said sour cream composition is substantially absent active thermophilic bacterial culture.

29. The composition of Claim 28 wherein said soy component comprises soy milk.

30. The composition of Claim 28 wherein said thermophilic bacterial culture comprises from about 1 to about 99% Lactobacillus bacteria and from about 99 to about 1% thermophilic Streptococcus bacteria.

31. The composition of Claim 28, where said sour cream composition comprises from about 1% to about 30% of said fat and said oil component, wherein said fat and said oil component is selected from the group consisting of animal fats, vegetable oils, vegetable fats and combinations thereof.

32. The composition of Claim 28, further comprising at least one flavor component selected from dairy, fruit, vegetable, spice, salt, natural sweetener, artificial sweetener, chocolate, vanilla or combinations thereof.

33. The composition of Claim 28, wherein said sour cream composition is dehydrated.